



Operation Iron Swords Updated to 1 p.m., December 7, 2023

Northern Arena

- 387 attacks
- 90 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 14 other terrorist-organization operatives killed
- One Lebanese army soldier killed

Israeli Casualties

- Approximately 1,200 military and civilian dead (unofficial estimate)
- 138 abducted remain in the Gaza Strip

Rocket Fire

- About 10,500 rockets and mortar shells
- About 10% failed launches

Overview¹

► **The combat arena:** During the last day, IDF combat focused on three focal points in the Gaza Strip. In the south, in the Khan Yunis area, the forces initiated an integrated attack on Hamas' epicenter, encircling the city and beginning to maneuver to its center. In the north, in the Shejaiya and Jabalia areas, the forces raided a post of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing.

► **According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 413 of them soldiers and officers; 138 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, 17 of them women and children; 113 hostages have been returned to Israel.**

► **The issue of the hostages:** Senior Hamas terrorists persist in blaming Israel for the failure to continue forging an exchange deal and now claim they will be prepared to renew negotiations only after a general ceasefire. They also insist on the separation between a deal for the return of civilians and one for those they define as soldiers whose "price," they say, will be higher.

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

► **The Gaza Strip:** The Palestinians report extreme overcrowding in the Rafah area, where many residents who were evacuated from the combat zones now congregate. They also complain that too little aid enters the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing.

► **The northern sector:** Hezbollah continued attacking IDF positions and concentrations of soldiers along the northern border. The IDF responded with artillery fire and airstrikes. Lebanon submitted a complaint to the UN Security Council after a Lebanese army soldier died in an Israeli attack.

► **Judea and Samaria:** In Ramallah, Fatah organized a solidarity procession with the Gaza Strip and with the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons.

► **Yemen:** Yemen launched a surface-to-surface missile at Eilat which was intercepted by the IDF before it even reached Israeli territory. The Houthis said all their activities, including attacking ships at sea, was directed only against Israel and they did not intend to endanger international maritime traffic.

► **The UN:** In an unusual move, the secretary general decided to activate Article 99, which allows the Security Council to be informed of any matter that it believes is liable to threaten the preservation of international peace and security.

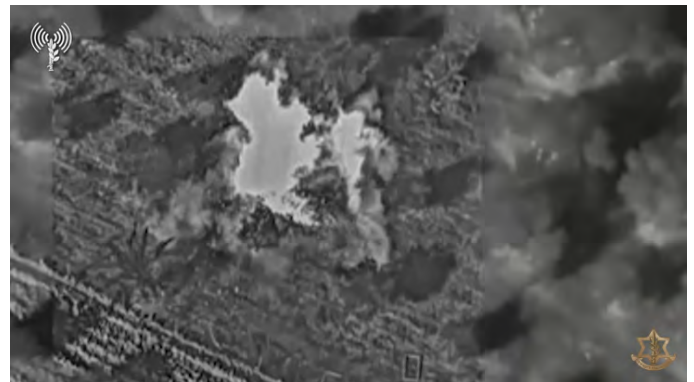
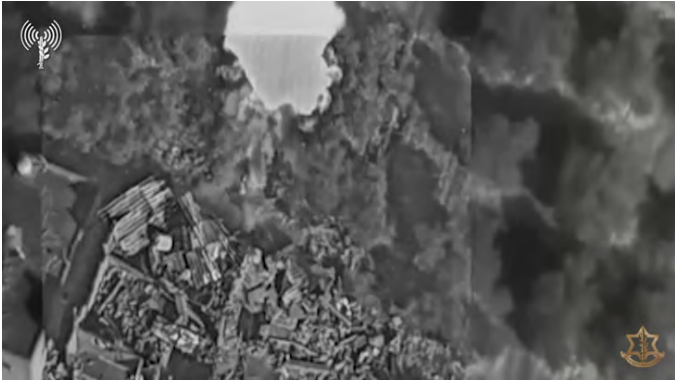
The Combat Arena

► During the past day, IDF forces continued their activities in the northern and southern Gaza Strip, with three divisions engaged in heavy fighting.



IDF forces in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, December 7, 2023)

► **Ground activity:** On the morning of December 6, 2023, IDF forces launched an integrated attack on the Hamas epicenter in Khan Yunis. They broke through the defense lines of the Khan Yunis Brigade, surrounded the city and began maneuvering in its center (IDF spokesperson, December 7, 6, 2023).



Right: Eliminating a terrorist holding the RPG. Left: Eliminating a terrorist (IDF website, December 7, 2023)

► **Ibrahim Qanan, a correspondent for al-Ghad TV in Khan Yunis**, reported continuous IDF air and ground force attacks in the Khan Yunis area. He said the rescue forces evacuated the dead and wounded to Nasser Hospital. He also noted that because of the large number of casualties, civil defense forces had to evacuate them s in their own vehicles (Al-Ghad TV, December 7, 2023).

► An al-Arabi TV reporter using a studio screen monitor to explain the IDF's ground maneuvers in the Khan Yunis area, noted that the IDF forces were in the area to the east of Khan Yunis and were trying to enter the city itself through several axes from the north and east (al-Arabi TV YouTube channel, December 6, 2023). According to reports, there was heavy fighting between IDF and Palestinian "resistance" [terrorist] forces in the area east of Khan Yunis " (al-Arabi's YouTube channel, December 7, 2023).



Al-Arabi TV broadcasts information about the IDF's ground maneuver in the Khan Yunis area (al-Arabi TV YouTube channel, December 6, 2023)

► **Jabalia, northern Gaza Strip**: Using tank fire and airstrikes, IDF forces killed a large number of terrorist operatives in face-to-face battles near the Jabalia refugee camp. In a mosque and a school, they located sniper rifles, explosives, anti-tank missiles, rockets, operational shafts and swastikas painted on its walls. Rocket launchers and warehouses were located near the

school. Later, the forces raided a post of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades' Central Jabalia Battalion and killed a number of terrorists. A network of tunnels leading out of the post, a training complex and a munitions warehouse were located (IDF spokesperson, December 6, 7, 2023).



**IDF forces clear out a weapons warehouse located in the northern Gaza Strip
(IDF website, December 6, 2023)**

- ▶The Palestinian media reported that during the morning, IDF tanks operating in the Jabaliya refugee camp fired about a hundred shells at residents and buildings. Videos were published showing residents fleeing to shelter (Shehab X account, December 7, 2023).
- ▶**Aerial activity:** During the past day, intensive air activity continued in support of the ground forces and to attack Hamas terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip.



Attacking terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, December 7, 2023)

- ▶The Palestinian media reported that the Israeli Air Force had attacked targets in Gaza City in the neighborhoods of Daraj, Zeitoun, Sabra, Shejaiya Palestine Square, the al-Zawiya market and the Old City. Dozens of dead and wounded were reported, whom the rescue forces could not reach (al-Quds, December 7, 2023). **Mahmoud Fouda, a correspondent for al-Ghad TV in Rafah**, reported that during the night, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked several buildings in the al-Shaboura refugee camp in Rafah, killing 18 Palestinians. He also reported that tanks

shot at eastern Rafah while Israeli Navy ships shot at Rafah seashore (Al-Ghad TV, December 7, 2023).



Right: IDF attack in the Rafah area (Wafa YouTube channel, December 6, 2023). Left: IDF attack in downtown Khan Yunis (QudsN X account, December 6, 2023)

►Naval activity: The Israeli Navy assisted the forces operating on land, attacking Hamas terrorist facilities and military compounds with precision missiles and shell fire (IDF spokesperson, December 7, 2023).

Reactions to the fighting

►**Senior terrorist Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed that "resistance" [terrorist operatives], led by the Hamas military[-terrorist] wing, had "scenarios and operational plans," and was fighting "with strength and courage on all axes and on all fronts." He said the "resistance" had patience and the ability to cope with changes on the ground, and were using a "comprehensive plan" for military achievements to defeat the IDF. He claimed the reports of the IDF's plan to flood the tunnels were an IDF "invention" and part of its psychological warfare, and that many of its plans are unrealistic. He claimed that the "resistance" could deal with all such developments (al-Akhbariya News YouTube channel, December 6, 2023).

►**Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** claimed that so far the IDF had not been able to enter the southern Gaza Strip as it claimed, but instead entered open, agricultural areas, which it had entered in previous operations as well. He claimed the IDF was being very careful because the battles in the northern Gaza Strip were painful. He claimed that when the IDF tried to enter the southern part of the Strip, it would encounter resistance that could push it back, as happened in Gaza City. He claimed that in Gaza City the IDF had been able to take control of the coastal area, but when it tried to enter the city it had encountered strong resistance, "which caused it retreat to the coast." He claimed he could guarantee that the

"resistance" in the southern Gaza Strip would be stronger than what was seen in the north (al-Banaa YouTube channel, December 5, 2023).

► Referring to the video published by the IDF spokesperson about the IDF's exposure of an Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades' stockpile of munitions and rockets, he claimed that in the video a soldier was seen carrying a rocket that weighs more than a ton, and therefore it was a model of a rocket of the type shown at military displays. According to him, some of what was shown were models, some was equipment destroyed and collected from various places. He also noted that during the attack on October 7, Hamas had taken over Israeli bases full of military equipment and vehicles, and claimed they were "conducting a comprehensive assessment" of the video in order to respond to it, and emphasized that it did not negate the fact that "the resistance" was at the height of its activity (al-Jazeera Mubasher, December 6, 2023).

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

► During the past day, Palestinian terrorists continued launching rockets and mortar shells, mainly at the settlements surrounding Gaza. In the afternoon, a barrage of 12 rockets was launched at the Beersheba area. The IDF spokesperson noted that the rockets had been launched near the tents where civilians who were evacuated to the southern Gaza Strip now lived and near the UN facilities. Another rocket was launched by Hamas from within the humanitarian zone. The rocket fell in the territory of the Gaza Strip and endangered many Gazan civilians. He added that a similar launch had been carried out the previous day at noon (IDF spokesperson, December 7, 2023).



Right: The rocket launched at Beersheba (IDF spokesperson, December 7, 2023). Left: A vehicle damaged by a rocket in Beersheba (QudsN X account, December 6, 2023)



Rockets launched at Israel from the humanitarian zone in the Gaza Strip Israel (IDF spokesperson, December 7, 2023)

► In the afternoon, sirens were activated in Eilat and a surface-to-surface missile was launched at Israeli territory. It was successfully intercepted in the Red Sea by air defense fighters and it did not cross into Israeli territory (IDF spokesperson, December 6, 2023).

Israeli casualties

► According to an unofficial estimate, since October 7 approximately 1,200 Israeli civilians and security personnel have been killed, 413 of them soldiers and officers; 138 civilian and military hostages are still being held by the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, 17 of them women and children; 113 hostages have been returned.

The issue of the hostages

► Given the heavy fighting, senior Hamas terrorists continue to mention a possible temporary ceasefire truce and the hostage exchange deal:

◆ **Senior terrorist Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas' political bureau**, said that Hamas had completed returning women and children. He said new negotiations regarding the exchange of prisoners would involve a complete cessation of "aggression" against the Strip. He claimed that when the "aggression" ended, they would be ready to resume negotiations and reach a comprehensive deal. He emphasized he meant the cessation of aggression and the withdrawal of IDF forces from the entire Gaza Strip (al-Akhbariya News YouTube channel, December 6, 2023).

◆ **Senior terrorist Hassam Badran, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, said the mediators were working for a ceasefire and Hamas was prepared to act on that basis. However, he claimed that if Netanyahu narrowed the issue down to the release of the Israeli hostages, it was a useless starting point and would not lead to a dialogue. Regarding the hostages held by Hamas, he claimed that regardless of the details or the

numbers, even when the women and children were exchanged, not all of them had been in the hands of Hamas' military[-terrorist] wing and they had needed time to reach them. He claimed the problem was that Israel did not want to continue the exchange (al-Jazeera Mubasher TV website, December 6, 2023).

◆ **Senior Hamas terrorist Taher al-Nunu, Ismail Haniya's media advisor**, said that contacts with the mediators in Egypt and Qatar has not stopped, but so far new understandings, agreements or proposals were not being discussed, and the issue was not being negotiated. He claimed any discussion would have to be based on the first step of ending the "aggression," and that the rejected a temporary ceasefire for a matter of hours or day in exchange for prices from the "resistance.". He claimed they could not hold discussions under fire and would not be extorted through attacks, and Israel had to stop its "aggression" immediately, after which any issue could be discussed (al-Ghad TV website, December 5, 2023).

◆ **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** said that after the 50 women and children had been released during the four days of the temporary ceasefire, Hamas "found" 33 more, and then the ceasefire was extended by three days. Israel said that there were ten more women, and submitted the list, but it turned out that they were female soldiers who had military ID numbers, one of whom had been "captured" [kidnapped] from a tank. Hamas claimed they were military personnel for whom there are "different rules." He claimed Hamas had offered various proposals, all of which were rejected by Israel, and a few hours before the end of the temporary ceasefire it became clear that Israel was resuming the fighting "for no reason." The mediators made efforts which Israel rejected, so Hamas decided that until the "aggression" and fighting ended they would not discuss the issue of the hostages (al-Anbaa, Kuwait, YouTube channel, December 5, 2023).

◆ On another occasion Hamdan claimed it was Israel that had prevented the extension of the temporary humanitarian ceasefire, and when Israel resumed attacking and did not respond to the mediators' proposals, Hamas said it would not negotiate with Israel under fire, as Israel wanted. He reiterated that there had been hostages who were brought to Gaza whose whereabouts Hamas was unaware of, and neither their number nor condition could be discussed if there was no opportunity to look for them, calm was

need for that. He added that they were looking for people to bring back to Israel, and the minimum requirement was for the "aggression" to stop, even if only temporarily. He said that since no talks were being held on the subject, the matter is in the hands of the military[-terrorist] wing, the only ones with the capability to release information al-Jazeera Mubasher, December 6, 2023).

◆ **Senior terrorist Muhammad al-Hindi, deputy PIJ secretary general**, stated the hostages were Israel's Achilles heel. He claimed at first they talked about the civilian women and children, but when that ended, Israel wanted to include female soldiers, and that is what caused the negotiations to fail. He said they insisted the soldiers, male and female, would only be released in exchange for emptying the Israeli prisons of Palestinian prisoners. Regarding the presence of civilian women held by Hamas, he claimed that "apparently" they had "three women who belonged to that category," and Israel wanted to "blackmail" [the terrorist organizations] and introduce "new rules" in the exchange deal when it asked for the release of ten hostages, which meant bringing seven male or female soldiers who were serving or had served in the reserves into the deal (al-Jazeera Mubasher TV website, December 5, 2023).

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The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

► **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in Gaza** reported that during the past day, 350 Palestinians were killed, bringing the number of dead since the beginning of the war to more than 17,177 and the number of wounded to more than 46,000 (al-Jazeera Mubasher Telegram channel).

► **Muneir al-Barash, director of the ministry of health in Gaza**, reported that today there were approximately 7,000 seriously injured people in the Gaza Strip who needed surgery, and only 400 of them had so far been treated in hospitals outside the Gaza Strip (Shehab X account, December 7, 2023).

► The Palestinian media reported on the continued erection of tents by evacuated residents in the Rafah area. Residents who were interviewed on the subject complained that following the

IDF's announcements, they were being forced to evacuate from area to area and they no longer had a safe haven in the southern Gaza Strip (Wafa YouTube channel, December 6 2023).

► Their complaints were reinforced by **Dr. Ayman al-Rabab, a Palestinian political commentator originally from Khan Yunis**, who said no place was safe in the Gaza Strip today and families which evacuated from the northern Gaza Strip had eventually found their deaths in IDF attacks in the Rafah area. He said the Rafah area was overcrowded with evacuees, with about 1.2 million people. He claimed that the United States was trying to improve its image by demanding that Israel bring 120,000 liters of fuel into the Strip, while at the same time it continued to equip Israel with weapons and missiles for the fighting in Gaza (al-Ghad TV, December 7, 2023). **Senior Hamas terrorist Osama Hamdan** claimed that the safe zones declared by Israel were death traps (al-Jazeera Mubasher, December 6, 2023).



Right: Tents erected in the Rafah area (Wafa YouTube channel, December 6, 2023). Left: Garbage piles up in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip (QudsN X account, December 6, 2023)

► Jordanian al-Mamlaka TV broadcast a video about Rafah, which has become a city of evacuees and is very overcrowded (al-Mamlaka TV, December 7, 2023). Before there war the population of Rafah was 250,000 people, while now, with the influx of evacuees, it has reached over a million (al-Ghad TV, December 7, 2023).



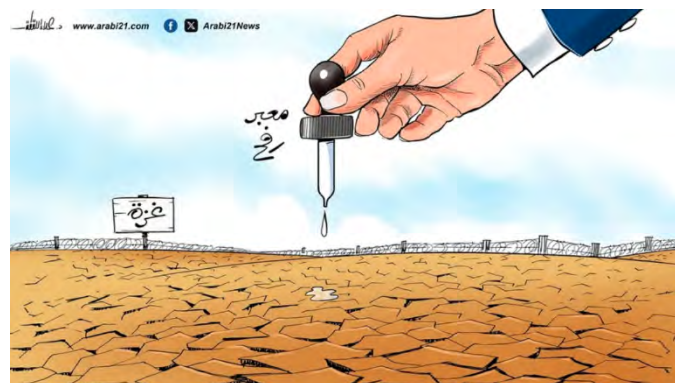
Rafah, crowded with evacuees (al-Mamlaka TV, Jordan, December 7, 2023)

► **Lebanon-based PIJ spokesman Muhammad Alhaj Musa** claimed the warning issued to the residents of Khan Yunis urging them to evacuate, and the prevention of the delivery of basic goods into the Strip, were a continuation of the [alleged] "war of extermination" being carried out in front of the world without anyone's lifting a finger (PIJ media information bureau Telegram channel, December 6, 2023).

► UNRWA reported that as of December 5, 2023, over 1.9 million people had been displaced from their homes in the Gaza Strip, of whom 1.2 million people were sheltering in 155 of the agency's facilities (UNRWA website, December 7, 2023).

Aid to the Gaza Strip

► The Palestinian Red Crescent reported that 80 trucks carrying humanitarian aid from the Egyptian Red Crescent had entered the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing. The aid included water, food and medical equipment (Hamza al-Masri's Telegram channel, December 6, 2023).



Palestinian cartoon by Alaa al-Laqtat stressing that the aid entering the Gaza Strip is a drop in the ocean (Sawaleif website, December 5, 2023)

►The Jordanian army reported that during the night, its air force transferred medical equipment for the Jordanian field hospital in Khan Yunis (PaldfX account, December 7, 2023).



**Loading medical equipment for the Jordanian field hospital in Khan Yunis
(PALDF X account, December 7, 2023)**

►In a telephone interview, **senior Hamas terrorist Ismail Haniyeh** elaborated on how Israel [allegedly] deliberately harmed the health system in the Gaza Strip, noting that the Gaza Strip was facing an unprecedented humanitarian and health disaster. He said the UN was now working in one way or another to bring aid into the Gaza Strip by coordinating with Egypt and the Palestinian Red Crescent. He claimed the level of functioning of the UN was insufficient and inconsistent with the scale of the humanitarian tragedy in the Gaza Strip. He stressed that the UN had to be free of American restrictions and not surrender to Israeli dictates, including with regard to aid, and had to reexamine the dynamics of work inside Gaza, including the protection of displaced persons who fled to UNRWA schools and institutions (Ekhbariya News YouTube channel, December 6, 2023).

Statements by senior officials

►**Senior Hamas terrorist Taher al-Nunu, Ismail Haniyeh's media advisor**, said in response to the American plan to entrust the management of the Gaza Strip after the war to the Palestinian Authority, that it was an internal Palestinian matter that had nothing to do with Israel, and that was not what would bring security, but the end of the "occupation," and that was the way the United States should go. He noted the American administration wanted the Gaza Strip to return to the security policy currently in place in Judea and Samaria, which included security coordination with Israel, and the cessation of "resistance." He said when such an offer would be made, they would be willing to discuss the issue with an open mind, while putting the Palestinian interest first, and within a comprehensive national framework.

Asked whether Hamas had not received similar proposals from Arab countries, he said they had heard about some of the proposals in the media, but so far had not received any clear official proposal (al-Ghad TV website, December 5, 2023).

► **Senior Hamas terrorist Ismail Haniyeh**, speaking at the "The Holiness of al-Aqsa Mosque and the Responsibility of the Muslim Nation" conference organized by Majlis Ittehad-e-Ummah Pakistan in Islamabad, asked for Pakistan's intervention in stopping Israel's "aggression." He said that if Israel faced resistance from Pakistan, which he called the "land of jihad fighters," the aggression might stop (Pakistani website Pakistan Today, December 6, 2023).

► **Senior terrorist Ghazi Hamad, a member of Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip**, gave a speech at a conference in Beirut organized by the Association of Islamic Radio and Television Stations, entitled "Messengers of Truth," in support of the media in the Gaza Strip. He said the media war was no less intense than the military or political war, stressing that a journalist should not be neutral, but should be a fighter for freedom and justice, and that there were journalists who had paid the price for that and had been dismissed from their jobs. He claimed Hamas' media campaign was "important and decisive" because it began with an attack when the Israelis began presenting Hamas as ISIS, portraying the war against Israel as an act of aggression, saying Hamas had killed civilians and raped women, and they tried to spread that narrative all over the world. Hamad stressed that Hamas had succeeded, through its media and "steadfastness," in reversing the picture. He claimed the credit went first to the Palestinian journalists working on the ground, as well as to the Arab and Muslim journalists who went everywhere and succeeded in conveying the "truth." Regarding the situation on the ground, Hamad said Israel boasted daily that it was killing senior Hamas leaders and destroying tunnels and resistance bases, but so far it had not broadcast a single video proving that, contrary to the resistance (i.e., Hamas), which published daily documentations of clashes with IDF soldiers (al-Manar TV website, December 6, 2023)

► A delegation of senior Hamas figures, headed by **senior terrorist Bassem Na'im, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, met in Johannesburg with the secretary general of South Africa's ruling party and the party's international relations committee. According to Hamas, the meeting discussed the latest developments in the war in the Gaza Strip and ways to support the Palestinians, bring aid into the Gaza Strip and stop Israeli aggression. Hamas expressed appreciation for South Africa's role in supporting the Palestinians' struggle to achieve their

rights (Filastin al-'Aan, December 6, 2023). According to a report by the African National Congress party, a Fatah delegation also participated in the meeting, headed by **Abbas Zaki, a member of Fatah's Central Committee**, (ANC X account, December 5, 2023).

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The Northern Arena

Hezbollah's activity

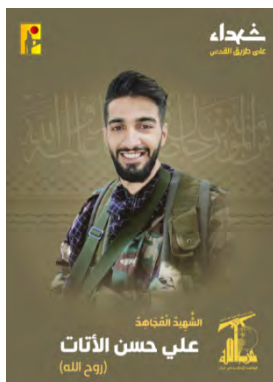
- ▶ Hezbollah continued attacking IDF posts and forces. During the past day, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 13 attacks (11 attacks were carried out on December 6, 2023, starting at noon, and two attacks on the morning of December 7) (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, December 6, 2023).
- ▶ IDF forces responded by attacking the sources of attacks, also carrying out tank and artillery attacks on several areas in Lebanese territory. IDF aircraft attacked a Hezbollah operational headquarters and terrorist facilities (IDF spokesperson, December 6, 2023).



**Documentation of an attack on a Hezbollah military headquarters
(IDF spokesperson, December 6, 2023)**

Hezbollah fatalities

- ▶ Hezbollah reported the death of Ali Hassan al-Atat, aka Ruhollah, from Harat Hreik (the Hreik neighborhood) in al-Dahiya al-Janoubia (Hezbollah's Shi'ite stronghold in the southern suburb of Beirut) (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, December 6, 2023).



Hezbollah fatality (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, December 6, 2023)

► **Nabil Qaouq, a member of Hezbollah's Central Council**, speaking at a ceremony commemorating the Hezbollah operative who was killed in south Lebanon, said there was a real war of attrition against Israel in south Lebanon, which, he claimed, had led to a change in all Israeli plans. He noted that the "resistance" would not take lightly its responses to Israeli attacks causing harm to civilians or soldiers in the Lebanese army. He noted that the "resistance" would respond quickly and forcefully to any Israeli attack on Lebanese homes or security personnel. He added that no one today relied on international institutions, including the UN Security Council, and it was the "resistance" that defended the land and people of Lebanon and the Gaza Strip (al-Ahed, December 7, 2023).

The Lebanese army

► The tenure of Lebanese Army Commander Joseph Aoun has reportedly been extended for six months after Hezbollah supported it (al-Jadeed, December 6, 2023).

The Lebanese government

► **Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib** said he had instructed Lebanon's mission to the UN to file a complaint with the Security Council in response to an attack on the Lebanese army that led to the killing of one soldier and wounding of others. Bou Habib noted in the complaint that Lebanon stressed its commitment to the full implementation of Resolution 1701 and demanded Israel's full commitment to honor it as well. He also stressed Lebanon's desire to de-escalate the situation and restore quiet along the border (al-Nashra, December 6, 2023).

► According to "sources" described as close to the French decision-makers, during his visit to Beirut the head of French intelligence met with Hezbollah figures and discussed the

implementation of Resolution 1701 in return for Israel's withdrawal from territories on the border between the two countries (al-Jadeed, December 6, 2023).

► Lebanon's foreign ministry condemned "the criminal activity of settlers in the West Bank and its intensification in an extremely concerning manner in recent weeks." It was noted that the activity had caused the deaths of about 1,000 Palestinians in the West Bank since the beginning of 2023. The ministry also condemned the expansion of settlements in the West Bank, the expropriation of land and the destruction of Palestinian homes (Lebanese foreign ministry X account, December 7, 2023).

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Judea and Samaria

Preventive and counterterrorism activities

► The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities throughout Judea and Samaria. During the past day, a total of 21 wanted Palestinians were detained, four of them Hamas operatives. Since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip, about 2,200 wanted Palestinians have been detained, including about 1,100 Hamas operatives (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, December 7, 2023).

◆ Operating in the Nur al-Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm, the security forces detained five wanted Palestinians. Heavy engineering vehicles exposed IEDs planted under the roads. Shots were fired and IEDs thrown at the forces, who responded with gunfire (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, December 7, 2023). The Palestinian media reported one Palestinian fatality (Wafa, December 7, 2023).

◆ Operating in Beit Ummar (north of Hebron), the security forces sealed a branch of Hamas' Islamic Society, and in Zahariya (south of Hebron), the forces seized a lathe for manufacturing weapons (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, December 7, 2023).

◆ In al-Bireh, the forces sealed a printing press that was printing inflammatory materials for Hamas (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, December 7, 2023). The printing press reportedly belonged to released prisoner Ashraf Barghouti and was called the Rocket Design and Printing Company (QudsN X account, December 7, 2023).



Printing press in al-Bireh sealed by the IDF (QudsN X account, December 7, 2023)

- ◆ In another operation in the Old City of Nablus, the forces detained three wanted Palestinians. Clashes broke out between armed Palestinians and IDF forces. In response, the forces shot at a Palestinian gunman (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, December 7, 2023). The Palestinians reported one fatality (Ma'an, December 7, 2023).

Support for the Gaza Strip

►Members of the PLO's Executive Committee and Fatah's Central Committee participated in a march held in central Ramallah, initiated by Fatah in support of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Mahmoud al-Aloul, deputy chairman of Fatah, said the march protested the "aggression" attacking Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria and everywhere. He demanded an end to the "war of annihilation" and a ceasefire, stressing that the Palestinians had the right to freedom and to live safely in their country. Qadoura Fares, minister of prisoners' and released prisoners' affairs, sent a message to the Gaza Strip, saying, "We are one blood, one pain and one fate" (Wafa, December 6, 2023).



The march in Ramallah (Wafa, December 6, 2023).

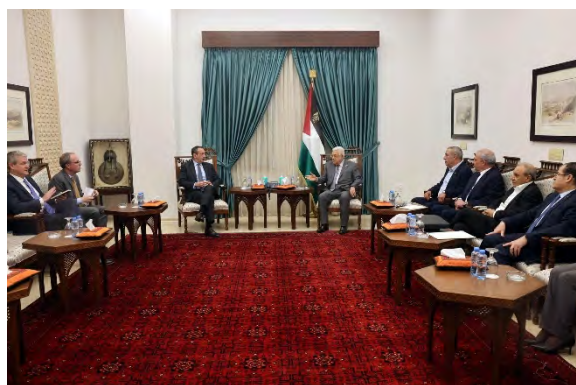
Continued condemnations of the Maccabean March

►The PA foreign ministry condemned the Israeli police permit to hold an "extreme right-wing" march to al-Aqsa Mosque, calling it "a blatant attack on the Palestinian people and Jordanian Hashemite custodianship of the holy sites." The ministry called for urgent international and American intervention to stop the march, especially in view of the current circumstances (PA foreign ministry X account, December 6, 2023).

►The Jordanian foreign ministry also condemned the event and held Israel fully responsible for the consequences of the "dangerous escalation" taking place at the same time with the war in the Gaza Strip. It called on the international community to put an end to "the ongoing Israeli violations in the occupied Palestinian lands" (Jordanian foreign ministry X account, December 6, 2023).

Palestinian Authority (PA)

► **Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority**, met in Ramallah with **Philip Gordon, national security advisor to American Vice President Kamala Harris**. Abbas said the United States had to intervene and pressure Israel to stop its ongoing aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. He also said aid to the Gaza Strip had to be doubled and water, electricity and fuel had to be supplied as quickly as possible so that hospitals could resume their work (Wafa, December 6, 2023).



Mahmoud Abbas meets in Ramallah with Philip Gordon, American vice president's national security advisor (Wafa, December 6, 2023)

Iran

► **Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi**, who left for a short visit to Russia, said before leaving that the Palestinian issue was one of the most important issues to be discussed during his meeting with President Putin. He said the attacks in the Gaza Strip had to be stopped as soon as possible and medical equipment and food had to be transferred to the Gaza Strip (Tasnim, December 7, 2023).

► **Hossein-Amir Abdollahian, Iranian foreign minister**, spoke with his Qatari counterpart, **Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani**, to discuss the latest developments in the Palestinian arena. They stressed the need for an immediate cessation of Israel's "war crimes" and the transfer of humanitarian aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip. Abdollahian said the "Islamic resistance" had so far responded forcefully to the "aggression of the Zionist regime" and that the coming days would be "very terrible" for Israel (Fars, December 6, 2023).

► **Hossein Salami, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)**, told a conference in Tehran that what was happening in the Gaza Strip was "suicide for Israel." He noted that Israel would not be able to wage a long-term war that caused it severe economic damage, and that the most significant factor in the continuation of the war was the personal needs of the Israeli prime minister. Salami added that the Zionists and the Americans were not acting rationally and that in the end, the Palestinians would prevail. Salami added that the seizure of the ships by the Houthis had a broad strategic impact, proving that there was a new equation in the region and that superpowers had lost their power (Fars, December 6, 2023).

Pro-Iranian militias

Iraq and Syria

► The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for an attack on the American Harir army base in northern Iraq and two attacks on the Ayn al-Assad base (Resistance Telegram channel, December 6, 2023).

Yemen

► **Yahya Saria, spokesman for the Houthi armed forces**, issued a statement claiming responsibility for launching ballistic missiles at the city of Eilat. He stressed that they would continue their military activity against the "Israeli enemy" and prevent Israeli ships from moving in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf to bring about an end to the "aggression" in the Gaza

Strip (Yahya Saria's X account, December 6, 2023). A senior State Department official said the American Navy had intercepted a drone launched from an area controlled by the Houthis in Yemen (Reuters, December 6, 2023).

► **Houthi Defense Minister Mohamed al-Atifi** said in a speech aboard the Galaxy Leader that the Red Sea from the Gulf of Aqaba to Bab al-Mandeb had become a no-go zone for Israel and that any Israeli ship passing through the area would be attacked. He noted that they were prepared to attack Israeli stationary or moving targets in the toughest possible way, in support of the Gaza Strip. He claimed that peace in the region depended on the end of Israel. He also promised that the Red Sea was a safe zone for international trade, except for Israeli ships or those connected to it (al-Masirah, December 6, 2023).

► **Muhammad al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Houthis' political bureau**, said the objective of all their military operations was to pressure Israel to stop its “aggression” against the Gaza Strip, and that they were aimed only at Israeli ships. He warned the other countries against opposing their actions because, he said, their reasons were “moral and humanitarian.” He said that when Israel stopped its “crimes,” they would stop their actions (France24, December 6, 2023).

► At the same time, referring to the Houthi attacks in Yemen against ships in the Red Sea region, senior American administration officials said that military action against the movement would be wrong for the time being. They said the Houthis were trying to attack ships linked to Israel, not American warships. It was noted that the United States was concerned that an attack on the Houthis could cause further escalation in the Middle East (Politico, December 6, 2023).

The Arab Arena

Qatar

► **Muhammad bin Abdelrahman, prime minister and foreign minister**, spoke with **Antonio Guterres, UN secretary general**, to discuss the latest developments in the Gaza Strip. Abdelrahman expressed his country's support for the efforts of the UN and its secretary general to reduce the escalation, and emphasized the need to continue bringing aid to Gaza (Qatari foreign ministry X account, December 6, 2023).

Jordan

► **Ayman al-Safady, the Jordanian foreign minister**, said they would confront any Israeli attempt to separate the Strip from Judea and Samaria, and if they wanted regional stability in the region it had to confront Israel. He also said that the international community had to take action to protect its interests, at least in the region. He alleged Israel was "murdering an entire people" and the international silence covering Israeli "barbarism" could not be accepted (al-Jazeera, December 6, 2023).

► The Jordanians released four Jordanian citizens who were arrested in June 2023 for their membership in a smuggling network to Judea and Samaria on behalf of Hamas (al-Jazeera, December 5, 2023).

Saudi Arabia

► The Hezbollah-affiliated al-Akhbar reported meetings between France and Saudi Arabia regarding the future of the Gaza Strip. "Sources" revealed the two countries were working to create a common vision which would be acceptable to all parties for stopping the war. To that end, a meeting was held between a senior Saudi Arabian official and a senior official at the French foreign ministry where the "vision" was presented, including a ceasefire, the surrender of senior Hamas terrorists, the release of Israeli hostages, and the imposition of a local government acceptable to the parties. The vision also included the departure of Hamas leaders from the Gaza Strip to a country that will be ready to host them, possibly Algeria. Regarding the day after the war, they discussed the presence of Arab peacekeeping forces under UN auspices and playing the Saudi Arabian-Israeli "normalization card" to exert pressure for reaching an Israeli-Palestinian peace. According to al-Akhbar, the parties do not rule out the establishment of a "joint transition council" of the various political parties in Fatah, Hamas and the PIJ for four years during which presidential and parliamentary elections would be held (al-Akhbar, December 7, 2023).

The International Arena

The UN

► For the first time since taking office, Antonio Guterres, the UN secretary general, activated Article 99 of the UN Charter and warned against a complete breakdown of public order in the Gaza Strip because of the severe conditions created by the fighting, which could make the provision of humanitarian aid impossible. He called on the UN Security Council to help

prevent a humanitarian disaster in the Gaza Strip, and repeated his appeal to declare a humanitarian ceasefire (UN website, December 7, 2023). Later, he spoke by phone with the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to discuss " the situation in the Gaza Strip and Article 99, which he activated (Saudi Arabian foreign ministry website, December 7, 2023).

G7 summit meeting

►The G7 leaders held a virtual summit meeting, attended by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. They discussed the situation in the Middle East and condemned the terrorist attacks in Israel carried out by Hamas and the increase in settler violence in Judea and Samaria. They also expressed concern about the devastating effects of the war on the civilian population in Gaza, and welcomed the temporary ceasefire that has enabled the release of hostages and the introduction of essential aid to Gaza. In addition, they agreed they were committed to working together to help create conditions for a long-term solution for the Gaza Strip. Referring to the events in the Red Sea, they condemned the attacks against the vessels and called on the Houthis to immediately stop their attacks. They also stated they had reason to believe that the Houthi attacks were enabled by Iran (White House website, December 6, 2023).

The United States

►Regarding the situation in the Gaza Strip, John Kirby, the spokesman for the National Security Council, said that the United States continued to stand by Israel as it defended itself against the genocidal threat posed by Hamas. He noted that military aid from the United States continued to arrive in Israel on a fixed basis and included the types of weapons the IDF needed the most to pursue the Hamas leadership (US State Department website, December 6, 2023).

►**Senior terrorist Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, attacked Kirby's statement, asking "how could he not be ashamed to say that, this, given the massacres committed by the occupation in the Gaza Strip" He claimed this statement, by the United States which is biased in favor of Israel, was another attempt to deny Israel's "crimes" (Hamas Telegram channel, December 6, 2023).

Russia

►Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, met in Abu Dhabi with Muhammad bin Zayed, UAE president, to discuss developments "in the Palestinian territories" and the need for the international community to take steps to achieve a ceasefire and protect civilians. Putin

praised the role of the UAE in international forums, especially the Security Council, and its efforts, "which contribute to the global stabilization." Putin also claimed the UAE was Russia's "biggest partner" in the Arab world (UAE news agency RT, December 6, 2023).